

~Other Speakers S-Z: K.P. Yohannan:

Imagine you are in rush-hour traffic in Bombay, India—one of the world's most crowded cities with more than 18 million people. Streets are jammed. It's like a swarm of ants—buses, trucks, cars, auto rickshaws, bicycles and pedestrians everywhere. I've heard it said, "Our traffic system in India is the most organized confusion in the world." And this is what you're looking at—this organized confusion.

In the center of this maze stands a skinny little man. Now you're thinking, Does he want to get himself killed? What in the world is he doing in the middle of all this hubbub? But there is more to the picture. This is not just anybody—this man is dressed in a tan uniform, with the hat and badge of a traffic policeman, holding a sign that reads "STOP."

Mind you, he's no celebrity or public figure. He may have never been to college, but the moment he holds up his sign, you can hear the screeching of brakes. All the vehicles stop—Mercedes-Benzes, taxis, BMWs, trucks, you name it. It makes no difference whether the people in the vehicles are politicians, truck drivers, movie stars or taxi drivers, Sardarjis, Malayalees, Oriyas, Europeans or Americans. Everybody comes to a halt. When the man in the uniform waves them on, off they go once again.

Let's say the following week this same individual comes to the same spot, but he's wearing his pajama kurta while standing in the middle of this crazy Bombay intersection. Now what do you think is going to happen? "Oh!" you say. "This time he will get killed!"

What's the difference? When he stands there as an officer, he's not just representing himself. His uniform, badge, cap—they all indicate he works for a higher authority. He represents the laws of the land, the judges and the punishment that awaits those who disobey. If you choose not to follow his directions, you will have more than just him to deal with. As a policeman, he has the backing of his superiors' power. He is not the authority himself. He simply represents it.

If we truly realized that the authorities—in our nation, at work, in the church and in our homes—are actually God's delegates and not just the people we see or read about every day, we would have less difficulty obeying them. If we could picture them as that policeman in the Bombay intersection—with a uniform and badge indicating they represent the authority of the living God—it would change everything for us.